

# A NOTE ON SATAKA-KĀVYA

(1)

If Sanskrit kāvya literature were to be compared to an ocean the different patterns of poetic composition in this literature would appear like rivers and streams flowing into the ocean. The important streams are, of course, the epic, the lyric or *khaṇḍakāvya* and the stray verse or *muktaka*. The epic poetry embraces the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*, and the classical ornate epics of poets like Kālidāsa. The *khaṇḍakāvya* specimens are the two lyrics of Kālidāsa *Rtusamhāra* and *Meghadūta*, *Ghaṭakarpāra-kāvya*<sup>1</sup>, *Caurapañcāśikā* of Bihlaṇa<sup>2</sup>, *Gitagovinda* of Jaydeva<sup>3</sup> and poems of this type. *Muktaka*<sup>4</sup> is a single-verse pattern; it does not contain a story element developed through continuous and

1. Tradition associates Kālidāsa with Ghaṭakarpāra and Vetālabhaṭṭa, among the nine gems of the court of Bhoja or Vikramāditya. Jacobi thought *Ghaṭakarpāra-kāvya* to be earlier than *Meghadūta*; but this does not appear to be so. Keith regards Jacobi's suggestion as « implausible ».

2. Bihlaṇa: son of Jyeṣṭhakalaśa and Nāgadevī; born at Koṇamukha near Pravarapura in Kashmir, of a pious learned family of Midland Brahmins; his father was a grammarian; left Kashmir to seek fame and fortune when Kalaśa came to the throne; literary career extended over the 3rd and 4th quarters of 11th century A. D.; when he came to South the Chalukya king Vikramāditya VI, Tribhuvanamalla (A. D. 1076-1127) honoured him and gave him the office of Vidyāpati; his *Vikramāṅka-devacarita*, an historical kāvya, was completed before 1088 A. D.

3. Jayadeva was a court poet of Lakṣmaṇasen of Bengal; Govardhana and Dhoyī were in the same court and his contemporaries; Śrīdharaśa in his *Saduktikarṇāmṛta*, compiled in A. D. 1206, quotes from Jayadeva; an inscription of A. D. 1292 has a verse from the *Gitagovinda*; so, 12th century A. D. is his time.

4. Cf. Bhāmaha, *Kāvyaālaṅkāra*, I. 30: *anibaddham punar gāthāśloka-mātrādi... / Daṇḍin, Kāvyaadarśa*, I. 13ff.: Comm. of Raddishastrin quotes from *Agnipurāṇa* (337.36): *Muktakam śloka ekaikaś camatkāra-kṣamaḥ satām* / Also quoted is another commentator Harinātha, who says: *anyānapekṣa ekaślokanibandho muktakam / Pratāparudriya, Kāvyaaprakaraṇa* 71: *asargabandham api yad « upakāvyaṃ » udīryate / asargabandham Sūryasatakādi / Sāhityadarpaṇa*, VI. 313-314: *padayagadyamayam dvīdhā / chhandopabaddhapadam padyam, tena (dvitīyena padyena) muktana muktakam /*

connected verses. A striking poetic idea, a mental state or a sound reflection is expressed in a couplet or a stanza of four lines. A *muktaka* is like a *śloka* or a stanza; but it is neither incomplete nor insufficient. Even in a very limited compass it expresses a whole thought or a mental state. A skillful artist may take a big canvas, use several figures, patterns and colours, and paint a full picture; or he may create an outline with a few deft strokes of his brush on a small canvas. The latter will not reveal the rich and varied details of the picture-image; and yet it will have a completeness of its own. The *muktaka* resembles this self-sufficient outline in which a poet reveals a thought or emotion with few chosen words. The completeness of revelation is contained within its own self.

A little elaboration of the *muktaka* form has been made for a purpose. The *śataka-kāvya*, which is the subject of this writing, is really a *muktaka* pattern from the point of view of its literary form and structural composition. The only difference is that a hundred stanzas are strung here together, so that *śataka-kāvya* denotes a collection of hundred *muktakas*. Sanskrit poetic literature shows many *śataka-kāvyas*. From the sixth to the eighteenth century A. D. a number of small and great poets have composed stray verses which, considered as collections, could be described as *śataka-kāvyas*. Their subjects are varied; and the composers have used various metres also, like *gāthā*, *āryā*, *śārdūla-vikrīḍita*, *sragdharā* etc.

A bird's eye view of the *śataka-kāvya* literature would be facilitated, I think, by adopting some principle of classification. One such principle is the subject of the poem. Using this principle, it is possible to group the *śataka-kāvyas* into three categories: One category is of erotic poems. The *muktakas* here describe love. The poet paints in each separate stanza some phase or state of love, and all the hundred verses taken collectively form a series of pictures of love. The second category is of thoughtful or reflective verses. A glimpse of life's experience or a valuable reflection touching some phase is to be found in each of these verses. The third category may include verses of praise and prayer, mostly of a religious nature, otherwise called *stotra-kāvya*.

## (2)

Love is a perennial subject of literature. The emotion of love is bound to have an unbroken attraction for the poetic imagination and the reader's mind as long as there is human life on this earth. It is not easy to trace the beginnings of stray verses written on the theme of love and collected together from a chronological point of view; but the extant and available literature in Sanskrit shows the existence of *śṛṅgāra*-based *śataka-kāvya* in the sixth century A. D. The most impor-

tant name in this category is *Amaru-śataka*<sup>5</sup> of the poet Amaru, which holds a place in the first rank, possibly in a chronological account but undoubtedly in sheer poetic merit and in lyrical expression of a tender emotion. In these hundred *muktakas* Amaru has revealed varied and alluring pictures of the emotion of love. There is here a young, inexperienced, innocent girl feeling the impact of love for the first time, as there is a glimpse of an experienced *nāyaka* enjoying his pleasures of love. The poet has spread, as it were, a multi-coloured rainbow of love through these verses. The *Amaru-śataka* gives us portraits of untrained, innocent young maidens, as well as proud, haughty ladies; there are here female companions trained in the art of love who can give correct advice to a newly married girl. There is a traveller here separated from his wife whose heart throbs with memories of love and quivers with pain at the sight of dark rain-filled clouds of the monsoon. There is an anxious lover entreating his beloved to give up her anger. There is an impatient wife, yearning to meet her husband, and worrying her head to find out a polite excuse to drive out the maids who are still lingering in the bed-chamber for no reason. We also meet a sophisticated wife, clever and resourceful: The house parrot was repeating in the morning the love talk between her and her husband, and that too in the presence of the elders in the house. Overcome with shame and embarrassed by this revelation of privacy, the bride snatched a ruby from her ear-ring, placed it in the parrot's beak, shut its mouth and saved the situation. The parrot's mistaking the ruby for a pomgranate seed is an understandable illusion; but the resourcefulness of the *nāyikā* in tricking the parrot and in saving a very embarrassing situation appears to be as clever as it is delightful. Amaru's *muktakas* are full of such delightful pictures of love. And in presenting these pictures the practised skill with which he has handled the long and complicated metres like *śārdūlavikrīḍita* and *śikhariṇī*, his simple and easy diction which avoids heavy compounds, compel the admiration of a discerning reader. The delightful and intense theme of love and its limpid expression combine to make this poem a literary treasure. It is no wonder that a prestigious theoretician and literary critic like Ānandavardhana felt that Amaru's *muktaka*, a single stanza, has the greatness of a *prabandha*, a massive composition<sup>6</sup>.

It is natural to remember the poet Hāla's *Gāthāsaptasatī*<sup>7</sup> when thinking of *muktaka* verses on erotic themes. But there are in this col-

5. 7th century A.D. Ānandavardhana refers to Amaru with great appreciation.

6. *Dhvanyāloka*, III: ... *Amarukasya kaver muktakāḥ śṛṅgārarasasyandinaḥ prabandhāyamānāḥ prasiddhā eva* /

7. Hāla taken to be Sātavāhana, lord of Kuntala Janapada, capital Pratiṣṭhāna; encouraged Prakrit; Sarvavarmā, author of *Kātantra Vyākaraṇa*, is supposed to have taught him Sanskrit, and Guṇāḍhya's *Bṛhatkathā* composed during his regime; placed in the 1st century A.D. Keith discounts the Sātavāhana date of 1st or 2nd cent. A.D. for *Gāthāsaptasatī*; evidence of Mahārāṣṭrī Prakrit, according to him, suggests A.D. 200-450 as the period of this compilation.

lection, as the name indicates, seven hundred *gāthā* verses which express different aspects of love, and the composition is not in Sanskrit but in Mahārāṣṭrī Prakrit. There is another noteworthy difference. The entire background of these verses is of village life and the emotion of love delineated poetically belongs to village girls. Their speeches and utterances, their manners and customs, are coloured by the nuances of village life. These village girls are by nature quite straight-forward. But they are equally confident about their skill in the art of love. They cherish in their heart the ambition to outshine a sophisticated maiden from the advanced town or city in dexterity which the sport of love demands. In presenting convincing pictures of emotion and in projecting realistic images of the subject both Hāla and Amaru, however, seem to be poets of a true genre.

The *Āryāsaptasatī* of Govardhanācārya<sup>8</sup> is modelled on Hāla's collection. In *āryā* metre, which resembles *gāthā*, seven hundred verses on erotic themes are presented here, and the composition is in Sanskrit. Govardhanācārya possesses a composer's skill and has a fair command over the Sanskrit language. But his *Āryāsaptasatī* misses the intense emotional appeal which is found in the verses of Amaru or Hāla. An important reason in this connection appears to be the establishment of some poetic conventions and consequent stylisation in the literary treatment of *śṛṅgāra*. The poets of this period and of the following times, who had acquired the craft of poetry-making but did not possess the poetic genius, were under a compelling influence of these conventions and tried hard to emulate them in their compositions. The later love poetry presents the same conventional pictures of love with minor variations over and over again. And barring the individual poetic talent and the variety of metrical construction, the face of the emotion of love that stands before the reader appears to be familiar from old days.

In the « Kāvya-māla » series published by the Nirṇayasāgara Press, Bombay, there is in one book a poem called *Bhāvaśataka* by one Nāgarāja<sup>9</sup>, which may be looked upon as a typical example of conventional composition. Jagannātha Paṇḍita<sup>10</sup> presents in his *Prāstāvika-vilāsa muktaka* verses addressed to such objects as animals, birds, moon, lotus, bee; they are *anyoktis* or *aprasuta-praśamsās*, and under the guise of addressing an irrelevant object they imply an emotional or

8. Court poet of Lakṣmaṇasen of Bengal, contemporary of Jayadeva who praises him in his *Gitagovinda* for his skill in treating *śṛṅgārārasa*; 12th cent. A. D.

9. Nāgarāja is the son of Jalapa and grandson of Vidyādhara of Karpaṭi-gotra; at the end of the poem *Bhāvaśataka* he is spoken of as « a king who was the ornament of the Ṭaka race », perhaps a family of petty chiefs, whose capital Kāshṭha was on the bank of Yamunā, north of Delhi. Cf. Krishnamachariar, *History of Classical Sanskrit Literature*, Madras, 1937, p. 379.

10. Jagannātha Paṇḍita is associated with the court of Shahjahan; 17th cent. A. D. According to Prof. R. B. Athavale (*Rasagaṅgādhara*, Marathi tr. and Intr., Vol. III, Tilak Vidyapith, Poona) J. was born in A. D. 1572 and died some time before 1670.

thoughtful reflection on human life, relations and behaviour. The poet Nāgarāja has adopted this mode of expression in his *Bhāvaśataka*. The *Bhāminīvilāsa* and *Karuṇāvilāsa* of Jagannātha contain striking pictures of love and of love in separation. Jagannātha is an accomplished poet; his skill in mellifluous and musical word-construction is quite apparent; occasionally he comes out with a brilliant poetic idea, or succeeds in presenting an old idea in a new and beautiful garb. The verses also are of the *muktaka* type. However, as the number of verses in these collection does not come to a hundred, they cannot be strictly called *sataka-kāvyas*.

The *Śṛṅgāraśataka* of Bhartṛhari<sup>11</sup> stands out therefore in this category. Plain statement and very lucid diction and style are the outstanding features of Bhartṛhari's poetry. Having taken the subject of *śṛṅgāra* Bhartṛhari deals with it without any reservation. Innuendo or indirect expression is not his method; plain-speaking is. So, it is no use finding fault with this poet for his open pictures of love and the undisguised expression of the art of love; on the contrary one may admire the poet for his open, uninhibited poetic revelation. When Bhartṛhari turned to the themes of *Nīti* and *Vairāgya* he showed the same intensity and plain-spokenness as are found in his expression of the erotic theme. In scrutinizing the journey of Bhartṛhari's emotional life from the passion of love to resignation one, therefore, feels that the poet could not have been so intense and honest about the feeling of resignation had he not really experienced the luxury and abandon of the emotion of love.

## (3)

In accordance with the principles of Sanskrit Poetics the mutual feeling of love between man and woman is *ratī*. The poetic expression of this abiding, universal emotion of love (*sthāyi-bhāva ratī*) turns into the rhetorical sentiment of love (*śṛṅgāra-rasa*). When this *ratī* or love is expressed about god it is to be called the emotion of devotion (*bhakti-bhāva*)<sup>12</sup>. Natural as the mutual attraction and love between sexes is, devotion to god is equally a natural emotion of the human heart. As emotion of the heart *śṛṅgāra* and *bhakti*, thus, come close together in poetic expression, the object of love only being different in the twin emotions. And it is interesting to find that if Sanskrit poetic literature abounds in the description of eros it does not lack in profuseness in the sphere of devotional poetry too.

11. Bhartṛhari is referred to by the Chinese pilgrim I-tsang; probably the poet and the grammarian, author of *Vākyapadīya*, are identical; the grammarian is known to have died in A.D. 651; the date therefore is 7th cent. A.D.

12. Cf. Mammaṭa, *Kāvyaprakāśa* IV. 35: *Ratir devādiviṣayā vyabhicārī tathā-ñjitaḥ / Bhāvaḥ proktaḥ...* // Viśvanātha, *Sāhityadarpaṇa* 260b-261a: *Saṅcārīṇaḥ pradhānāni devādiviṣayā ratih / Udbuddhamātraḥ sthāyī ca bhāva ity-abhidhīyate //*

Consideration of devotional poetry easily brings to mind the several *stotras* of Śrīmat-Śaṅkarācārya<sup>13</sup> which are a marvellous blend of devotion and Vedānta philosophy; the *Ālabandāra stotra* of Yāmunācārya<sup>14</sup>; several Vaiṣṇavite, Śaivite, Jain and Buddhistic devotional poems; the songs of praise and prayer addressed to various deities and found in the Purāṇas; and devotional poetry of other poets. But the context of *śataka-kāvya* must restrict our choice to few compositions only.

In a *śataka-kāvya* of devotional type the poet chooses his own favourite deity as the subject of his composition. There is an intense desire to propitiate the deity through the modes of remembrance, contemplation, praise and prayer. There is also a strong desire to seek the favour of the deity and obtain thereby some cherished fruit; occasionally the *stotra* may be an expression of deep gratitude and bliss for a favour already obtained. As a literary form the composition is still a *muktaka*, because each verse is complete and self-sufficient in itself; but the subject, namely, the description of a particular deity, gives the separate verses a kind of homogeneous unity, which other collections of *muktakas*, which touch different aspects of some emotion or different reflections, do not have. The separateness of the verses in this category of devotional poetry appears to fade in the central personality of the particular deity.

The *Caṇḍīśataka* of Bāṇabhaṭṭa<sup>15</sup> and *Sūryaśataka* of the poet Mayūra<sup>16</sup> come in this category. The poem of Mayūra is a praise of Āditya, Sūrya or Sun. Mayūra draws pictures of the Sun's brilliant orb, his dazzling rays, his chariot and horses, his charioteer Aruṇa and so on, offering his faithful devotion to this god of light. In these varied pictures there are poetic imageries consistent with the accepted poetic conventions, an outline of rich details, and also an expression of the proper feeling of devotion. The poet firmly believes that the blessings of the Sun-god will dissolve sin of any kind, and man will be endowed with health, long life, glowing vigour and brilliance of intellect. This faith finds expression in the hundred and first verse which closes the poem. There is a popular story that Mayūra was seized with leprosy, and he was cured of this dreaded disease by his sincere propitiation of the Sun-god and in virtue of the deity's blessing. It is likely that the story may have originated from this verse which describes the fruits of devotion to Sun and the poet's profound faith in the divine powers of Sun reflected in the poem.

In *Caṇḍīśataka* Bāṇa praises Caṇḍī or Pārvatī, the divine slayer of the demon Mahiṣa. The form that Pārvatī revealed while killing Mahiṣa, the particular pose with one foot lifted up that she struck in bringing her weapon down on the chest of the demon Mahiṣa, that form, that

13. 7th-8th century A. D.

14. Preceptor of Rāmānuja; 10th century A. D.

15. Bāṇa, patronised by Harṣavardhana of Kanauj; 625-650 A. D.

16. A relative of Bāṇabhaṭṭa; 7th cent. A. D. first half.

lifted-up foot of the goddess, linger continuously before the poet's mental eye. He turns to the form and the pose continuously and describes them with renewed poetic imageries. « *Sā-avatāt Āmbikā vah* » this phrase or words of identical content form a refrain, as it were, of this devotional poem of Bāṇa.

The *Rāmaśataka* of the poet Someśvara<sup>17</sup> seems to imitate the literary mode of Bāṇa. But Someśvara has the gift of a real poet. His praise of Rāma in this poem easily mingles with the moving flow of the biographical narration, and his diction is free from artificial embellishment.

Among the poems of the later period mention must be made of the *Devīśataka* of Ānandavardhanācārya<sup>18</sup>, *Īśvaraśataka* of the poet Avatāra<sup>19</sup> and *Rasikarañjana* of Rāmacandrakavi<sup>20</sup>. The peculiarity of the *Rasikarañjana* is that it nourishes the emotion of devotion and of resignation, both, by a clever manipulation of words.

The sincerity of devotion expressed in these devotional poems need not be questioned. It may be assumed that a poet would not be impelled to offer a mead of praise to his favourite deity unless his heart were brimming with the feeling of devotion and struggling to find an expression. But a survey of many a devotional poem, especially of the later period, leads one to suppose that the poet is bent on displaying his skill in poetic composition, and appears to be more anxious to dazzle his reader and win his approbation by his clever craft rather than winning the favour of a god by a moving expression of his personal devotion. Were it not so, the manipulation of the mastery over verbal expression and the flights of imagination on the strength of erudite poetic conceits that are often found in these devotional poems would not be easy to be justified. Even poets like Bāṇa and Mayūra use a long and intricate metre like *śragdharā*, long and heavy compounds, heavy and difficult diction to achieve some musical effect, and allow themselves to be carried away by poetic fancies. Compare, for instance, the following lines of Mayūra<sup>21</sup>:

*Vyagrair agrya-graha-indu-grasana-gurubharair*  
*no samagrair udagrāiḥ /*  
*Pratyagrair īṣad-ugrair udayagirigato*  
*gogaṇair gaurayan gām //*

which express only the idea of the Sun coming up the eastern mountain,

17. Someśvara was the son of Kumāra and Lakṣmī; his eighth ancestor was the *purohita* of Mūlarāja, founder of the Chālukya dynasty of Anahilwād; the poet was a friend of the ruler Vastupāla (1179-1262 A.D.); his date is 13th cent. A.D.

18. The famous author of *Dhvanīlōka*; 9th cent. A.D.

19. No information available.

20. The work is printed, Bombay; according to Krishnamachariar it was composed in A.D. 1524.

21. *Mayūra* or *Sūrya-śataka*, v. 98.



obscuring the planets and the moon, and with his straight and dazzling rays plunging the earth into a glory of light; or the following lines of Bāṇa<sup>22</sup>, describing the fall of weapons in a combat:

*Cakram cakrāyudhasya kvaṇati nipatitam  
romaṇi grāmaṇīva /*

*Sthāṇor bāṇaś ca lebhe pratihatam-uruṇā  
carmaṇā varmaṇeva //*

The lines jingle with alliterative sound of letters like the musical sound of anklets. It is somewhat surprising that Bāṇa uses less compounds in his verse than in his prose, and his word-construction is more free and less affected than that of Mayūra. However, a real lover of poetry is apt to feel that if god is pleased with a single flower or a few petals offered in sincere devotion, where is the necessity of raising such forests of word-flowers to propitiate him, particularly in devotional poems? The natural emotion of the heart need not be weighted down under the load of heavy ornamentation. These devotional poems display all the craft of workmanship; but this is mechanical skill, not an expression of spontaneous feeling. There is no perception here, but exhibition. Such poetic constructions may dazzle one's intellect; but it is doubtful if they can move one's heart.

(4)

It is fortunate for a lover of literature that all poets are not lost in playing with words like children with their toys. A true poet who possesses the artist's instinctive vision is also a seer. He is able to discover hidden essences, closed to the ordinary eye, from the innumerable aspects of the life of the people, and is engaged in giving them a tangible form in words. In this creative effort the poet's observations and the words in which he clothes them attain the value of imperishable truths of life. They are verities of life and well-expressed in poetic words. In Sanskrit they are known as *subhāṣitas* and stand out as jewels of wisdom. The *muktakas* and *śataka-kāvyas* contain many such moral and didactic observations. Touched by the vision of a poet they have a universal validity.

In this category of poetic literature, full of moral, ethical and philosophical truths, Bhartṛhari's *Nīti* and *Vairāgya-śatakas* deserve to take the pride of place. Penetrating vision of discovering principles and truths, subtle and sincere power of observation and mirror-like transparent expression, these poetic qualities have bestowed on Bhartṛhari's words an uncommon splendour. The poet, who in his period of erotic

22. *Caṇḍīśataka*, v. 73.



inclinations created a lovely picture of woman with all the attractive details, tells the reader now, when his mind is filled with the feeling of resignation, that the body of a woman which men generally take to be a lake of loveliness is nothing but a puddle of skin, and man is struggling in vain to take a plunge into it like insects into a muddy pond.

The ethical and philosophical statements of Bhartṛhari are like lighted lamps on the dark path of life. *Sarve guṇāḥ kāñcanam āśrayante*, « all virtues take the shelter of gold », is a hackneyed observation now; but how devastating and convincing it is! « Even the god of creation will fail in pleasing a fool » is a statement whose validity has not been impaired by the passage of time. The tree-tops bear the scorching heat of the sun; but to the weary traveller coming to their trunk for rest the trees offer cool shade; *paropakārāya satām vibhūtayah*, « the great and virtuous exist on this earth only to oblige others »: this is a universal truth which we may have experienced some time in our own life.

A study of poetic literature often leads one to suppose that the poetry of love and devotional poetry may not fully and completely reflect a poet's mind. A studied use of poetic conventions leads to the recurrence of the same ideas over and over again; and such poetry, however embellished, does not reach our heart. A poet's clever manipulation of words may dazzle a reader, but it may leave him cold so far as the emotion of the poem is concerned. The genuine didactic verse seems to stand therefore in a different class. A poet's observation in a *subhāṣita* may not be absolutely new; its verbal expression may not have the grace of charming poetry; and yet its power of thought cannot but affect us. Sanskrit poetry leaps up with such fountains of life's reflections. A later poet, Nīlakaṇṭha Dīkṣita<sup>23</sup>, observes in his *śataka-kāvya*, *Sabhārañjana*:

*Āhatya cinumaḥ svargam apavargam anukramāt /  
Anukūle hi dāmpatyē pratikūlam na kiñcana //*

Harmony and full accord with one's wife is an assurance that the pleasures of heaven and the happiness of spiritual liberation are here on this earth.

The *Anyokti-kalāpa* of Jagannātha Paṇḍita contains many such beautiful observations on human life. Kṣemendra of the eleventh century A. D. is a versatile and prolific writer, whose works like *Darpa-dalana* and *Cārucaryā* are well known in this category. The poet has wisely and intelligently attacked in them the prevailing defects and vices of society and suggested a line of pure conduct of life. Some old poems

23. Nīlakaṇṭha Dīkṣita, popularly known as Ayyā Dīkṣita, was the son of Nārāyaṇa and Bhūmidevī, grandson of Accā Dīkṣita and grand-nephew of Appayya Dīkṣita; his popular *campu Nīlakaṇṭhaviṇaya* was written in 1637 A. D. His period is 17th cent. A. D. Cf. Krishnamachariar, *op. cit.*

like the *Cāṇakyanīti* or *Vidūranīti* come to the mind in this context. Though these are not *śataka-kāvya*s precisely, they come in the same category of poetry of philosophical wisdom.

Among the successors of Bhartṛhari the poet who must be duly reckoned is Bhallaṭa<sup>24</sup>. His *Bhallaṭa śataka* is as well known as Amaru's Century of love poetry and is equally important for Sanskrit literature. Bhallaṭa's verses are often quoted in the works on Sanskrit Poetics. His style is mature and he writes with the confidence and grace of a true poet. The simplicity and transparency of Bhartṛhari's verses is, of course, not to be found in Bhallaṭa's writing. Bhallaṭa aims at conveying some deep truth suggestively and builds his verse for it with the essentials of poetry. For example, he describes in a verse a parrot who happens to see a cotton tree. He thinks that the fruit of the tree must be as charming as its flower. Luckily the fruit was also ripe. But alas! a forceful gust of wind came and threw the fruit far away. The only thing that the parrot got was despair and misery. The truth suggested by the verse is the outward form may be enticing but is often deceptive; we allow ourselves to be duped and experience consequently despair, misery and unhappiness through our own thoughtlessness.

(5)

The *śataka-kāvya*, thus, presents a variety which may appeal to different tastes: pictures of love, emotion of piety and devotion, wise reflections on life that may serve as a guide to one's own conduct. Some readers may, however, be attracted by lyrical and epic poetry only, and find these stray verses rather trite. Yet the essence of the *muktaka*, which is the form of the *śataka-kāvya*, is its tiny size and the completeness of its expression. It is like a miniature painting. It still has the power of engaging one's mind and giving a taste of artistic pleasure or philosophical wisdom.

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24. Bhallaṭa lived under the reign of Śaṅkaravarman of Kashmir (883-902 A. D.), and was a junior contemporary of Ānandavardhana; last quarter of 9th cent. A. D.